

## Message Text

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42

ACTION EUR-08

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R 091417Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0988

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY SANAA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 07066

LIMDIS

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, UK, SA, MU, XF

SUBJECT: UK DEFENSE SECRETARY'S VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA  
AND OMAN

1. IN MEETING WITH VISITING DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL AHERNE  
MAY 8, FCO MIDDLE EAST DEPARTMENT HEAD LUCAS BRIEFED US  
ON ASPECTS OF DEFSEC MASON'S RECENT VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA  
AND OMAN, ON WHICH LUCAS ACCOMPANIED HIM. LUCAS SAID  
BRITISH WERE INTERESTED TO SEE THAT KING KHALID WAS MUCH  
MORE BUSINESSLIKE THAN THEY HAD EXPECTED IN 35-MINUTE  
INTERVIEW HE ACCORDED MASON. RASHAD PHARAON WAS PRESENT  
AND CONTRIBUTED TO THE CONVERSATION. SOMEONE TOOK NOTES  
THE WHOLE TIME. THIS SUGGESTED KHALID MAY BE MORE THAN A  
FIGUREHEAD, ALTHOUGH BRITISH DO NOT WISH TO DRAW CONCLU-  
SIONS ON SUCH LIMITED EVIDENCE.

2. PRINCE FAH'D DID MOST OF THE TALKING IN LONG MEETING  
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WITH MASON SUBSEQUENTLY, IN WHICH KEMAL ADHAM AND PRINCE

SAUD SAT SILENTLY. FAH'D DWELT ON COMMUNIST THREAT TO THE ARABIAN PENINSULA AS A WHOLE. HE SAID HE DID NOT WANT ANOTHER SE ASIA IN THAT PART OF THE WORLD. HE URGED THE BRITISH TO BRING THE DHOFAR WAR TO A SPEEDY CONCLUSION. FAH'D WAS AS VAGUE AS USUAL ON ASSISTANCE TO OMAN, THOUGH HE SAID SAUDIS HAVE GIVEN AND PLAN TO GIVE MORE.

3. MEETING WITH PRINCE ABDULLAH WAS MOVED AHEAD OF MEETING WITH PRINCE SULTAN AT LAST MINUTE. BRITISH WONDER IF THAT HAS SIGNIFICANCE IN TERMS OF INTERNAL DYNAMICS OF NEW REGIME.

4. AS PROMINENT MEMBER OF LABOR PARTY, MASON FELT HE HAD TO TAKE FIRM POSITION ON DHOFAR WAR. AFTER MEETING WITH SULTAN QABOOS (WHO IMPRESSED MASON), AND INSPECTION OF THE FRONT, MASON REPORTEDLY EXPRESSED DETERMINATION TO CONTINUE BRITISH ASSISTANCE AS LONG AS NECESSARY. PARTIALLY IN RESPONSE TO PLEAS FROM UK SOLDIERY IN DHOFAR, AND PARTIALLY DUE TO HIS OWN PERCEPTION OF LABOR GOVERNMENT'S NEEDS, MASON BELIEVES BRITISH SHOULD DO MORE TO PUBLICIZE WHAT THEY ARE DOING IN DHOFAR. HE THINKS HMG CAN BE JUSTIFIABLY PROUD OF ITS ROLE, BOTH THE MILITARY AND THE DEVELOPMENTAL. ON OTHER HAND, FCO OFFICIALS ARE MORE CAUTIOUS AND ARE INVESTIGATING POSSIBILITIES ALONG THIS LINE VERY GINGERLY.

RICHARDSON

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